

Economic Development Council

Manitou Springs Ahead in 2004

Manitou Springs' residents overwhelmingly supported the implementation of the Downtown Master Plan in last November's election and is preparing to **"Spring Ahead"** in 2004. The City already negotiated their necessary contracts with the Colorado Department of Transportation and will receive more than a half-a-million dollars in federal grant money in 2004 to help with our downtown improvements.

The revitalization efforts are complicated. Manitou Avenue is a multi-jurisdictional area and the process to gain all of the necessary approvals before construction can actually start, will be bureaucratic at best. At a bare minimum, it will take several months to complete the approval process. The primary concern is that construction will have a negative impact on our summer peak season. Rest assured everyone involved is very sensitive to the importance of summer visitor spending in our downtown. Nolte, the engineering firm for the project, has vast experience in historic downtown environments with tourism dependent economies. They will assure that all construction is phased to avoid interrupting business activity in summer peak season. Our merchants are already struggling to overcome a weak national economy and lower consumer spending of the past few years. They will take priority in all construction decisions.

The private sector will **"Spring Ahead"** in the next few weeks when Bill and 2 Chucks, LLC., breaks ground on their main building on Manitou Avenue. The partnership accelerated this phase of the project when 7 out of 10 residents voted to invest in the community with the passage of 2A. This is a multi-million dollar project. The firm reported a huge increase in inquiries after Manitou Springs demonstrated their will to improve public spaces downtown. Imagine...that 50 year old chain link fence coming down on the Avenue, while access to yet another mineral spring is made possible through citizen volunteerism and the Mineral Springs Foundation!

Next summer, the newly formed Business Improvement District (BID) will **"Spring Ahead"** with new marketing activities and additional "clean street" services within the central shopping district. The BID is expecting to finalize their business plan for the summer of 2004, in February. In the meantime, let's all do our best to clean up after ourselves and our visitors. The more effort we put into picking up litter such as cigarette butts, handbills and dog waste, the more our visitors will know we care about the quality of their visit in our town.

All of the positive forward motion for our community is possible because the City and private sector invested thousands of dollars, and citizens volunteered thousands of hours to make it happen. The volunteer board of the Manitou Springs Economic Development Council (EDC) will continue to take a leadership role. **Watch for exciting project announcements as the community continues to "Spring Ahead" in 2004 and beyond.**

PS – Credit is given to Mr. Rob Stephens for our "Manitou Springs Ahead" slogan development. Mr. Stephens is an investor in the EDC, a volunteer for many community efforts and a member of the Board of Directors for the Metropolitan Parking District.

Kitty Clemens
EDC Director